

Trashmouth Meets the Deadlights

orphan_account

Trashmouth Meets the Deadlights by orphan_account

Category: IT (2017)

Genre: Alternate Universe - Canon Divergence, M/M, Richie Tozier Gets Taken Instead of Beverly Marsh, unsanitary conditions

Language: English

Characters: Ben Hanscom, Beverly Marsh, Bill Denbrough, Eddie Kaspbrak, Mike Hanlon, Pennywise (IT), Richie Tozier, Stanley Uris

Relationships: Eddie Kaspbrak & Richie Tozier, Eddie Kaspbrak/Richie Tozier

Status: Completed

Published: 2017-09-25

Updated: 2017-09-25

Packaged: 2020-01-20 19:26:41

Rating: Teen And Up Audiences

Warnings: No Archive Warnings Apply

Chapters: 1

Words: 5,973

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

Richie gets taken by Pennywise instead of Beverly. He's a damsel, he's in distress, he can handle this. Actually, no he can't. He needs serious help. Good thing he has a wheezing, panicky nerd knight in shining armor to save him.

Trashmouth Meets the Deadlights

Author's Note:

hello everyone. i wrote this on my phone so excuse any spelling or formatting errors, i'll get on my laptop when it's fixed and actually edit this. also, i haven't written anything in a long time, and nothing for IT yet, so please be gentle

anyway, actual notes: this is pertaining to the 2017 movieverse. instead of beverly getting taken, it's richie. i've seen a few of these, and i thought i would try my hand at it. i hope you enjoy

EDIT: my laptop got fixed a lot sooner than i thought so i was finally able to edit, thank god

Summer was pretty fucking boring without any friends. Sure, Richie hung out with Stan sometimes, but he'd turned into a real Debbie Downer since Neibolt. Everyone had been through some shit, but Stan had coped with it the worst, and that was to say not at all. Even though he hated to say it, sometimes it was better to be alone than be around Stan, who constantly wrung his hands and looked over his shoulders and crossed the street to avoid storm drains. Ben stayed in the library, and Richie wouldn't be caught dead there: they'd held long discussions in the Barrens on the Odyssey, Edgar Allen Poe, and even Virginia fuckin' Woolf, but he'd rather have Henry Bowers gut him than admit he was *actually* intelligent. The first time he tried to help out Mike at his grandfather's farm had ended with him yarfing all over himself when Mike killed a sheep, so he was out of the question. Bev hung out with Bill nonstop, now, and Bill was... well, still not coming near him. But really, screw that guy anyway. He still missed him every day, even after almost a full month of their fist fight. He wouldn't admit that shit, not ever, but it didn't change the miserable pull in his chest when he saw Bill and Bev with their heads together, probably looking over some dumb plan to stop It.

And Eddie.

Out of all the Losers, he missed him the most. Probably because he was the only one that could call him Trashmouth and it not sting like

a motherfucker, that put up with his dick jokes and recognized all of his Voices even though most of them sounded the same, that swore and talked shit and told him to fuck off more than anyone but held his hand tighter too.

After Mrs. Kaspbrak put Eddie on house arrest, their contact had grinded to a halt. He snuck into Eddie's room that first night, threw pebbles at his window and everything like a *real* god damn romantic. But Eddie's knee accidentally made hard contact with his dick when he made an attempt to help pull him in through his bedroom window, and his yell awoke Mrs. K. She'd come waddling in, drawn in by the sound of pain like a shark.

"Edddieeee?" She asked, and turned on the light to see Richie on his knees, fully collapsed onto her son, wheezing dramatically. Eddie's arm situated itself around his rib cage and pulled him close, his free hand held the one that Richie wasn't using to give him the bird. He'd been repeating a giggling mantra of *are you alright's* when he spotted his mother, and all humor wiped away quicker than if he'd been slapped. Eddie was suddenly all too aware of the space, or lack thereof, between them, and let Richie drop limply to the floor before he took a large step away. "*Eddie*," Mrs. K whined, "what are you *doing*?" Her tone was not that of curiosity. It was pure malice.

"I was stealing his comic books," Richie had lied quickly. "I thought, y'know, he couldn't fight back. 'Cause he's a cripple now and all that." He laughed, "obviously I was *wrong*," and gave Eddie a glare. Eddie kicked him in the shin.

Needless to say, Richie had barely seen Eddie since. Aside from their occasional phone call or when Eddie picked up his meds - the pharmacy was across the street from the arcade - Richie was living in an Eddieless world. It wasn't fun, and he found himself hanging at the arcade more and more, just for the low chance of bumping into his best friend. But today hadn't been one of those days. He ran out of quarters yesterday, and wasn't about to sit around waiting for Eddie like he was his fucking boyfriend or something, so he decided to just stroll through town.

He frowned every time he passed a storm drain. He couldn't get that damn *clown* out of his head. The way it moved so alien, like a puppet

without strings that had to learn to move on its own. It had almost killed them at Neibolt. He could remember the hot dirt-sweat smell of his friends, the tear slick feeling of Eddie's face in his hands, the tightness of his collar around his neck when Bev pulled on it, how they had screamed, screamed, *screamed* when It turned on them, face contorted from the steel bar jutting out of its head.

He started stomping on the drains when he passed over them. Anger rose in his chest, putrid and thick and petty.

"This is all your *fault*," he told the drain, and jumped up to stomp both feet on the drain at once. "You *ruined* my summer, turned Bill into a *wack* job," he shoved his hands through his sweat knotted hair in frustration, "and broke my best friends *fucking!* *Arm!*" He stomped twice more. He stepped down from the curb and into the road to look into the dark hole where he knew that bastard lived. "*Fuck you!*" He screamed, and kicked the top of the drain. "You couldn't even kill a couple of *13 year olds!* What the *fuck* can you do, huh!?" He pushed his glasses up with a trembling hand. Fog was collecting at the bottom of the lenses. He panted, a stitch formed in a side as a result of his tantrum.

"*Beep beep, Richie,*" a voice slunk from the drain. It was George's voice.

"Oh, fuck," he said flatly.

"*Beep beep, Richie,*" George's voice said again, more aggressive, almost a growl. "*BeepbeepRichie, beepbeepRichie, beepbeepRichie,*" it repeated. Sewer water bubbled out of the drain, splashed against his worn down converse. A hand shot out of the drain and gripped his bare shin. "*BEEP BEEP RICHIE!*" Richie let out a choked cry as the hand pulled him forward and he fell hard on his back. He kicked into the blackness, gripped the asphalt until his fingers were bleeding and his nails lifted. It was useless - he was already into the drain down to his waist. Richie looked for anyone, anyone at all, as the clouded water climbed up his chest. It felt like there were pruneey, soggy hands clawing at every inch of him that was in under the water. He spotted an old woman and his heart leapt for one short lived second.

"Help! Hey- Help! *Please!*" He all but screamed. She glanced at him

and turned around as if she hadn't seen him at all. Or rather, *had* seen him, and didn't want to be involved. Richie screamed for her once more, a desperate and wordless plea, but she was gone. A gloved clown hand, the hand of *Pennywise*, gripped the hair at the top of his head and pulled him under.

The first thing Richie did was hack up a lungful of water. Then he realized what *kind* of water he'd just held in his mouth and throat and lungs, and yarfed until strings of saliva and stomach acid were the only product of his retching. He gasped for air and directed his gaze to where he was. His glasses were off, probably sitting in a puddle of wet shit in the pipes somewhere. He gagged again, but held it in. He had to get out. There was no way he was going to end up like those missing kids.

"Good job, Richie," Richie said, and blindly felt for walls. "Couldn't keep your trash mouth shut. Had to insult the fucking murder clown. Nice one! Hope it was worth dying for, asshole!" He said with fake cheer. His hand pressed against something grimy and hard, and he knew he'd gotten to the wall. He took a deep breath and felt along for some kind of door. It could probably do some squeeze-through-two-inch-pipes magic bullshit, but Richie was a human being, which meant there had to be something he could fit through *somewhere*.

The tinkling of a jack-in-the-box made him tense and turn to the wide expanse of the room. He pressed his back to the wall and grimaced when the scrapes from being dragged across the asphalt were touched.

Not being able to see made all of this so much fucking *worse*.

He jumped when the jack-in-the-box popped. He couldn't see what it was, it was too far and too small to even see a colored blob of it, but he wouldn't be surprised if it was some self gratifying prop of that fucking *clown*. Richie squinted at the huge tower of whatever that the box sat on, a feeble attempt to see what was coming as the circus announcer's hype speech wound to an end.

“-YOU ‘LL LAUGH, YOU ‘LL CRY, YOU ‘LL DIE ...”

A side of the tower fell open to reveal something boxy and glowing, and - there was something moving inside. The silhouette, dark, and tall, and inhuman, was dancing. It was silly, and yet it made his insides twist and curl in on themselves. Richie couldn't help but laugh at the absurdity; he was going to *die*, and what would kill him would be a giant clown that danced like a little marionette.

The music and the dancing stopped at once.

A moment of silence passed, and Pennywise lept out of the train car, landed, splashed guck and mud onto his clothes, not 10 feet from Richie. He screamed and half turned back to the wall, a scramble for a hidden doorway - he liked Pennywise back when he *couldn't* see him, thank you very much. He lumbered over slow and jerky, like Frankenstein's monster, and mocked Richie's cries and panicked scrambling with sobbed 'boo hoo's and a cartoony frown. He grabbed Richie by his neck and lifted him off the ground. His scratchy glove dug in until he thought his eyes would pop out of his head.

“You don't like my dancing, Richie?” he asked. There it was, that tone, the tone Mrs. K used when she was talking to Eddie - barely contained malice and contempt masked by a paper thin veil of curiosity and concern. Richie choked, jumped back to old habits, tried to smile.

“I liked that I couldn't see it-”

Pennywise gripped his neck harder, and Richie let out a weak cough, gave a weak kick of his legs, clawed at that dumbass clown's frilly arms, fought off the urge to beg, to cry, to be afraid. Slober dripped off of Pennywise's lower lip in thin strings. They stretched in elongated trails onto Richie's dirty face. He shuddered, pressed his lips together and turned his head to the side so it couldn't fall into his mouth. The clown gripped his jaw hard enough to bruise and turned his head back to face him.

“I can show you something you'll really like, Richie, I'll show you,” he giggled cruelly. Richie pulled his lips back in a grimace and groaned softly.

“J-Jesus, buh-buy a guy a, a drink first, man...”

Pennywise’s entire fucking *face* started to unhinge and pull up from his bottom jaw, like the most fucked up snake Richie had ever seen. Rows upon rows of gnashing needle teeth were revealed one by one. Saliva stretched between teeth the further his jaws pulled apart, until glowing lights shined clearly from the back of his throat. Whispers of every age, volume, and tone, yet all from the same voice, were crammed into Richie’s mind until it was crowded and full and fit to burst.

Richie tried to look away.

Richie stared.

And Richie floated.

Eddie scraped his cast with his fingernails, over the large printed LOVER on the side. He'd gotten the idea to change it from LOSER the week before last, when he called Richie, beside himself, after Gretta Keene grafittied the word. Richie was livid, but didn't patronize him about it, which he was grateful for; Richie never treated him like he was fragile like everyone else did. *You know I'm a lover, not a fighter*, he'd said, when Richie asked him why he didn't jump over the table and beat her dumb ass. A switch flipped in his brain, and he hung up the phone without a goodbye in his excitement. He spent the next hour finding a sharpie (nontoxic, so little Eddie didn't get sick from the fumes) to cover it up, to write a better word. When he met Richie at the arcade the following day, a hateful glance was thrown to his cast, before his eyes turned massive behind the coke bottles he called glasses and he broke out in a wide grin. *You're a damn fine guy, Eds*, he said, and looked at him in a way that made his stomach twist with (*guilt?*) unease.

But Richie wasn't with him, now. He wasn't at the arcade, or waiting by the curb when he got to the pharmacy to pick up refills. He leaned his head in his good hand and looked out at the arcade. Richie hadn't shown up. He thought that, maybe, he'd gotten there and left. He

huffed and looked back to the back room of the pharmacy, and wondered if Richie knew how much his company meant to Eddie. Summer sucked without him, big time. Nobody else wanted to see him lest they risk the wrath of Mrs. Sonia Kaspbrak, and Richie had been quite literally barred from entering the house. He could still remember his mother super gluing the latch to his window shut.

"I'm just looking out for you Eddie," she said delicately. "You know how fragile you are, and look what they already did to you!"

"We were attacked," he answered weakly. He felt pathetic and small. He always felt pathetic and small around his mother.

"Attacked! You wouldn't have been attacked if you weren't with those *delinquents* you called friends!" Her voice grew high and warbly, like it could snap at any minute. Eddie hated it. For a moment, he hated her.

"They saved my life," he said.

"Your life wouldn't have been in *danger* if-"

"How do you know!?" He asked, voice raised higher than he had ever dared before. "Really, mom, what *do* you know!? You don't know anything! You weren't *there*! You don't know what we went through! What they did for me! For *me*! Beverly, the girl *you* think is a *whore*, risked her life to save mine! And, and Richie *carried* me home!" His fists were curled so tightly the break in his arm ached. He focused on that instead of the pain on his mother's face. "You just want to control me because you're scared of losing me! You don't give a *shit* about-"

His mother smacked him so hard across the face his head snapped to the side. His eyes widened and his jaw dropped open. The left side of his face zipped with electricity, his blood roared in his ears in a deafening cadence. He felt his windpipe tighten painfully in panic, his fingers itched for the cool feel of his inhaler in his hands. She'd never hit him before. She'd never had to - the tears, the screaming, the guilt, always worked. And now, with the heat that rose to the surface of his skin and made his cheek burn and ache, he realized that this was one in the same of what she'd always done. The only

difference was that when she raised her hand to stroke his hair, he flinched.

“It’s the pain medicine,” she said, calm and absolutely certain. She could’ve been talking about what they were having for dinner. “It’s putting wrong thoughts in your head, making you doubt me. You don’t really think these things, dear.” She pressed her hand on Eddie’s burning face. He pulled away, her fingers curled into a fat, angry fist. She smiled. “Get some rest, Eddie. You need to rest.”

They hadn’t had a full conversation since. Eddie’s chest turned hot and slimy every time he looked at his mother, even when his face stopped stinging.

And so he was grateful for Richie, who still sat on the curb outside the pharmacy and shared a milkshake with him, who called his mother a whore when Eddie wouldn’t dare, who gave him half his quarters so they could play street fighter together, who would stop everything he was doing just to make him smile. It made it bearable, less lonely. It made summer less of a prison sentence.

At least, when he was actually *around*. He wouldn’t be at home, unnerved by his parents’ disjointed attempts at bonding on the best days, let alone in the sticky summer heat. Wherever he was, it wasn’t here, so Eddie wasn’t sure why he bothered bumping his brain cells together thinking about it.

“Here’s your prescriptions, Mr. Kaspbrak,” Mr. Keene announced, and slid the plastic bag over the counter. Eddie smiled faintly and thanked him.

It didn’t matter if Richie was two minutes away, he had to go home now. He could see him the next time he got his pills, or call him tonight. He bumped the door open with his shoulder and strolled out to the street. His mom had taken his bike away after he’d broken his arm, claiming it was too dangerous to ride with a broken arm (if she knew that Bill had ridden every Loser double on the back of Silver at least once, and that Eddie rode on the back of Richie’s bike on their way back from Neibolt, she would have lost her fucking mind,) and it would take at least 20 minutes to get back home. He figured he could make it 45 if he took his time.

He swung his bag by his side and hummed while he walked across the street to the arcade. He had a few quarters, it couldn't hurt to take a slight detour. When he stepped over the curb in front of the storefront, a paper crinkled under his foot. He looked down, and a chill made him go numb.

He stared perplexedly at the piece of paper for far too long. It was 30 seconds before he even noticed he'd dropped his bag. Eddie slowly lowered himself to his knees and picked up the paper in trembling hands.

It was a Missing poster with Richie's face on it, like they'd seen at Neibolt. Except now his face wasn't the lively yearbook photo in the poster they saw before. Now his face was sunken in, his jaw hung open with maggots squirming over his tongue, eyes rolled back and cloudy, his hair limp and wet over his head. His glasses glinted on the ground next to the poster. Eddie pocketed them with ice cold fingers.

MISSING

RICHIE "TRASHMOUTH" TOZIER

13 YEARS OLD

In the end, that wasn't what made him shit his heart onto the concrete. It was what was written where his parent's contact information and details on what Richie looked like should have been. It filled up the entire bottom of the page.

[illegible]

“Oh, fuck,” Eddie said breathlessly. His chest started to tighten, he couldn’t breathe, any second he would start to wheeze and gasp for air. He fumbled for the asthma inhaler in his fanny pack, squeezed the trigger. His airways started to open again. He gripped the poster in his good hand, felt it crunch and crinkle, knew it was real. He knew it, a thick cotton of certainty that pressed against the insides of his skull. Richie was in trouble, in danger, possibly dying, as he shivered in 80 degree heat.

He pressed his lips together and scrambled to his feet, bag of prescriptions long forgotten.

(don’t run eddie, you’ll hurt yourself)

He took off so fast a slight stumble sent him flying. The skin of his knees and inner forearm erased against the pavement, but he didn’t stop to assess the open, aired out sting of his skin or to stop the blood that rolled down his legs into his socks. He knew exactly where he needed to go.

“Bill! Bill!” Eddie screamed as he got close to the Denbrough house, where Bill and Bev were sitting in the lawn by their bikes. His dead sprint speed didn’t falter when he crossed the street, an uncommon action that made Bill give Beverly a nervous glance. He almost tripped again, balanced himself right before a wipeout. He held Bill’s shirtsleeve in a white knuckled grip as he tried to catch his breath. He tried his best to articulate between rough gasps. “Bill, it... it’s... Richie... Richie...”

“If he wants to-to talk he can come hih-h-hims-se-”

“Shut up!” Eddie yelled, to both of his friend’s shock. Bill took a step back. Eddie held his fists close to his chest. “I’m sorry!” He added, and though he was genuinely apologetic he looked no less angry. “I don’t give a shit about, about whatever you two hate each other for! Richie’s gone! It took him!” He thrust the crumpled Missing poster

into Bev's hands. There were bloody smears where Eddie's scuffed palms had stuck to the paper. He waited impatiently for them to read it, and grew more and more aware of the building burn in his skin where he'd hit the concrete and the stitch in his side.

Bill's face was slack with horror and guilt. Eddie knew that he was blaming himself, but he couldn't bring himself to care at the moment. Bill's voice was fragile and small when he spoke.

"W-Wuh-we-we ha-h-have, have t-t-t-"

"We have to save him," Bev answered for him, and they both ignored the discontented look he gave her. "We'll call all the Losers," she promised, and looked to Bill for confirmation. He nodded stiffly and pointed back to the inside of his house. He didn't dare speak, they didn't have the time. They all ran into the Denbrough home, to the phone that hung on the kitchen wall.

"Go wash up," Bill told Eddie, looking at his dirty and disheveled appearance while Beverly sped through Bill's address book to find the Loser's numbers. "You'll get an in-inf-infection." Eddie didn't move. It didn't look like he could. "I-I'll-I'll come with you." He gently guided Eddie to the kitchen sink across the room and poured water over his skinned arm.

"F-*shit*," Eddie hissed, snapped out of his reverie. He jerked when he started scrubbing, but Bill wouldn't let him pull away. Bev started talking gravely to Mike, Bill carefully washed dirt and gravel out of his knees with a soapy washcloth. "Sorry for telling you to shut up," Eddie said quietly. Beverly was talking to Ben now.

"It's okay," Bill answered evenly. "I d-d-don't know what I'd-I'd do if Beh-Bev went missing." Eddie laughed thinly.

"That's different."

"Is it?" He asked, and stared at Eddie with a raised eyebrow. Eddie pressed his lips together and stared at a point just behind Bill's ear. He contemplated what his friend implied.

"Yeah," he said slowly, and gave a sly grin, "Bev wouldn't talk It into

killing him.” Bill barked a laugh and scrunched his nose. Bev turned and pulled her lip back in confusion, and they both quieted out of shame.

“You’ll get your ass down there, Uris,” Bev snapped into the phone suddenly. “I don’t care how insane it is, Richie is our friend.” She tapped her foot and crossed her arm under her chest while she waited for Stan to, presumably, finish speaking. “He’d do the same for you, and you know it... no- no! I know you’re better than that! You’re too brave to be such a chicken shit! ... Be at Neibolt in 10 minutes. A life is at stake.” She put the handset back into its housing and turned back to the boys at the sink. She spread her hands out and smiled brightly.

“Everyone’s in,” she said, “Let’s go get Richie.”

Eddie rode double with Bill, and they were at Neibolt in 5 minutes.

It really wasn’t fair how long it was taking to get to Richie. Beverly took off her left sock and wrapped it around Mike’s bicep. He hadn’t stopped bleeding after Henry had slashed him in their knife fight (Eddie wasn’t completely sure *how* it all ended, only that Henry’s body had whizzed past them as it fell down the well, and Bill had joked not to get on Mike’s bad side) and having an open wound of that severity was dangerous in such a dirty place.

“It’s tight,” Mike said. Bev tied the sock in a knot.

“It’s supposed to be. I’ve done this enough times to know.” No one commented; they knew what her dad was like.

“Wuh-W-Where, where’s Stan?” Bill asked. The group looked over each other, Stan nowhere to be seen. At least, until he screamed.

It took all of them to fight off the painted lady that had Stan’s face in her sharp toothed maw. Bev grabbed her by the hair, Bill and Mike pried her jaws apart. She slunk away with an angered hiss and left them alone, in the dark, every sound overpowered by Stan’s screams

and hysterical sobs.

"You left me! You took me into Neibolt! You're not my friends! You're not my friends!" He cried, pulled himself away from their hands and shouted over their soft voiced attempts at comfort. He went lax and cried hoarsely when Mike held his hand, *i'd never leave you - i'd never do that to you*, and leaned into Bill and laced his fingers with Mike's. They had to hold him tight for far too long just to get him on his feet again, and even then he shivered and clutched Bill's arm to his chest like a comfort blanket. He took jerky steps, like he'd rather be anywhere else and had to force himself to keep walking. Eddie thought it was pretty brave that he decided to stay at all, and didn't comment on how it was slowing them down.

"Richie!" Eddie called into the dark pipes. The sound echoed and faded.

"Richie!"

"Tozier!"

"Richie!"

"Richie!"

"Trashmouth, come on!"

There was no response, not to anyone. Water dripped from the ceiling into the stagnant pools they waded through. Trash, leaves, moss, even a diaper brushed past Eddie's legs.

(eddie, you'll get an infection)

He kept moving. If his germophobia got the best of him now, he would never forgive himself. Richie needed him.

"We're coming, we're coming, we're coming," he repeated to himself until he started to wheeze, then took a huff of his inhaler and continued the mantra. Stan and Mike exchanged a glance of concern and awe at his behavior.

“Do you know where we’re going, Eddie?” Bev asked nervously.

“We’re going in the right direction,” he answered. He didn’t know how, but he knew. And he didn’t know how, but they believed him.

“This way,” Eddie said. He waded to the pipe that went left, sheets of water sprayed from his feet the faster he walked. His foot slipped into a deep drop off; he dropped his flashlight and ended up thigh deep in grey water. He dropped to his hands and knees, ignored the lapping of filth at his shoulders, and rummaged for the dimmed light that shined under the foggy water.

“What are you doing!?” Mike asked, panicked. He tucked his hands under Eddie’s arms tried to pull him back up, but Eddie pushed him away.

“My flashlight! I’m look- my flashlight!” He shouted at the water, chest tight. His fingers knotted through something stringy and soft, and he let out a disgusted cry. When he yanked his hand out of the water, it was tangled in black hair. Bev screamed, pointed her own flashlight at the objects floating next to Eddie, screamed again with company from the rest of the Losers.

“Oh my fucking *God*,” Bill moaned miserably, now a part of the effort to pull Eddie out of the water. “It’s a *h-huh-head*.” A human head. Eddie could recognize the water bloated, swollen eyed face of Richie Tozier. He screamed in disgust, frantically shook his hand to get rid of the hair wrapped around his fingers, and started to cry in his hysteria. Mike pried the hair off of his hand and threw it back into the water. He gagged more than once himself.

“Come on,” Ben said, and gripped Eddie’s bicep with a firm hand. He nodded miserably, determinedly, and pushed forward. They all breathed heavily. Exertion, fear, and pure emotional strain made their steps heavy and their breath ragged. But still they persisted.

“Richie!” Bev called breathlessly, and they stopped for a fraction of a second when the echo sounded different than before: more open, more distant in less time.

And then they ran.

“Richie!” Eddie yelled, voice growing desperate, “Richie!” He ran awkwardly through the water, breathed hard, looked over his shoulder with frantic, wild eyes. He was terrified, but not of It. He was terrified that he would find Richie dead. Terrified that the head they saw was *really* Richie’s, not just a scare tactic. Terrified they would find him dismembered and mauled.

They stumbled and almost toppled over each other trying to get into It’s lair. They tripped over the drop off and took wide and awkward steps to keep from falling.

“Richie! Rich-” Ben trailed off when their flashlights landed on Richie. He was *floating*, a puppet without an act. His arms limp at his sides, his head hung back as if he were staring at the ceiling. He was completely motionless.

“Let’s get him!” Bev called. She shoved Mike and Bill to snap them out of their dazes.

“Come on, guys!” Bill told Ben and Eddie. He pulled Stan along, who had loosened his grip on Bill’s arm only to hold his wrist.

Mike made a lift with his hands and levered Eddie up to grab Richie, who was easily 10 feet above the ground. Bill held him steady long enough for Eddie to reach Richie’s shoe. He pulled him down with all his strength. Richie fought against the downward pull, like an air filled balloon being dragged to the bottom of a pool.

He didn’t have to ask for help; the moment Richie was low enough the Losers started grabbing onto him. He was soaked, and slipped in their hands, but they didn’t let go. Bev held his shin with both hands, Stan pulled down on his ankle, Ben took fistfuls of his wet shirt, Mike and Bill took a hand each. Eddie pulled Richie’s glasses out of his pocket and balanced them carefully on his nose.

“What’s wrong with him?” Ben asked frantically. Richie’s eyes were cloudy and grey, wide open but completely unseeing. His face was slack, dazed, empty and devoid of any feeling.

"I-I... I don't know," Eddie answered tensely. He pressed his lips together and shook Richie's shoulders, but all that happened was Richie's head moving limply on his neck like a bobble head. "C'mon asshole," he begged miserably. "You're not allowed to fuck off and die just yet." He cocked his hand back before swinging an open palmed slap across Richie's face. Richie's head barely moved, his expression didn't change at all. His eyelids didn't even flutter.

"That's kind of funny," Stan commented dumbly, wide eyed and slightly amused. Bill smacked the back of his head for appearances, but secretly agreed. Eddie whined in the back of his throat and furrowed his eyebrows together.

"Eddie-" Ben tried to put a hand on his arm, but Eddie pushed him away.

"Fuck's sake-" he moved his hands from Richie's shoulders to his cheeks, and

(that's unsanitary, eddie, promise me you'll never)

pulled him in close before he put everything he ever felt for this jackass of a boy into a kiss on his lips.

"Woah-"

"Dude-"

"H-Hoh-Hoh-"

"Jesus Christ-"

It only lasted for a second. Richie's lips were wet and slippery and cold. They were soft but motionless against his own. Disgust coiled in his stomach: it was like kissing a corpse. Why was this romanticized? Why were there movies and stories about this? It felt *awful* - Eddie's throat constricted into a gag at the feeling alone, and the taste on his lips was worse. He thought, for a moment, that it had been for nothing. He'd kissed a *boy*, a *dead* boy, in front of all of his friends, and not only was it out of line they'd all be disgusted by him, and he wouldn't even get Richie back.

Then Richie gasped, and his eyes cleared. He pulled out of friend's hands, now that he could obey gravity on his own. He looked at Eddie and his face contorted into a frown, and panic ripped through Eddie's chest.

"Oowwww!" Richie cried out. He pressed two hands onto the cheek that Eddie had slapped. "Fuck *me* Eds, why did you hit me?" He asked. His voice was an octave too high and his words tumbled out of his mouth at fifty miles an hour. "Why would you do that!? I got kidnapped, you dicks! Haven't I been through enough!?" Everyone rolled their eyes at his antics. Bill patted his back sympathetically. He took a breath, a short second to calm down, and looked to his friends.

"Did someone kiss me?" Richie asked, no longer frowning. "I know it wasn't Bev, you homos." Eddie snorted and punched Richie's arm.

"I did, Trashmouth," he said with a hesitant grin. "I thought - hoped, it'd-it'd wake your dumb ass up."

"Aw, like true love's kiss! That's so cute, Buddy!" Richie teased. "I bet you loved that sewer taste, huh?" Eddie gasped lowly and stepped away.

"*That's* what that was?" He asked with disgust.

"Oh you bet ya bottom dolla, dahlin'," he said, in his southern belle Voice. "I'm cova'ed from head t'toe in piss an' shit." He took a step forward and held out his arms to Eddie. Eddie pointed a warning finger back at him and backed away.

"No fuckin' way, man."

"What, you're just gonna hit me and quit me? No cuddling?" He asked slyly. The Losers stood close together, made up a wall that kept Eddie from running away. Richie snaked his arms around Eddie's torso and squeezed. Eddie could feel the cold water squish through the fabric of their shirts. He made an exaggerated vomiting sound and tried to get his hands between them so he could shove at Richie's chest.

"You're the *worst*! I can't *believe* I wasted my first kiss on you!" Richie

laughed evilly and leaned in for another kiss. He made loud kissing noises that increased in volume the closer he got to Eddie's face. Eddie craned his neck away and groaned, but laughed when Richie blew a raspberry onto his cheek. He wrapped his arm around Richie's neck and gave him another solid kiss. They both laughed against each other's lips, clumsy and wet and cold and so, so terrified, and the Losers laughed at their antics and felt endearment swell in their chests for their best friends.

And for a second, everything was fine. For a second, nothing could hurt them, and nothing ever would.

Author's Note:

kudos, comment, bookmark, whatever, if you think it's necessary. thanks for sticking around to this point! i'm planning other IT and reddie fics (actual multichap fics, not just oneshots,) so watch out for me in the future if you want.